DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 379 856 EC 303 729

AUTHOR Malloy, William W.
TITLE Inclusion: An Educational Reform Strategy for All Children.
PUB DATE [94]
NOTE 35p.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.) (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Change Strategies; Cooperation; Curriculum; *Disabilities; Educational Change; Elementary Secondary Education; *Inclusive Schools; Individualized Education Programs; Mainstreaming; Multicultural Education; *Regular and Special Education Relationship; *Resistance to Change; *School Restructuring; Teacher Certification; Teacher Role
IDENTIFIERS *Reform Strategies

ABSTRACT

Inclusion, a special education reform strategy, should be refocused to accommodate the needs of children with and without disabilities. Inclusion can transform the status of children with disabilities from second to first class citizens and can eliminate the problem of children who have been misdiagnosed. Inclusion is characterized by a shared responsibility for the learning problems of students and minimization of special services outside the classroom. Existing barriers to this expanded focus are certain special education program mandates and elements of school structure related to organization and curriculum. These include Individualized Educational Plans, special education certification mandates, hierarchical school organization, and curriculum design as an element of social control. Changes in general education related to the reconstruction of the school's organizational structure through site-based management, adoption of a collaborative role of teaching, and implementation of a multicultural curriculum focus are suggested as the foundation needed to facilitate the transition from a traditional to an inclusive school. (Contains approximately 100 references.) (JDD)

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Inclusion: An Educational Reform Strategy For All Children

ED 379 856

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Abstract

Inclusion, a special educational reform strategy, should be refocused to accommodate the needs of children with and without disabilities. Existing barriers to this expanded focus are certain special education program mandates and elements of school structure related to organization and curriculum. Changes in general education related to the reconstruction of the school's organizational structure, role of instruction and curriculum focus are suggested as the foundation needed to facilitate the transition from a traditional to an inclusive school.

Introduction

There appears to be gradual recognition that inclusion, a strategy for improving equity for special education students, may also enhance restructuring initiatives designed to promote educational excellence for all students. Perhaps this trend is best reflected in the following statement: "Without question, there is a compelling need for departments of education, school districts and colleges and universities to provide high quality pre-service and in-service training to prepare all educators to work effectively with children with a diverse range of abilities and disabilities. The collaborative initiative is an exciting way to address these issues head-on" (Hunter, 1994, p. 4). The collaborative initiative being referred to is a form of inclusion. What made the statement noteworthy was that the senior associate executive director of the American Association of School Administrators, a premiere professional association for general education administrators, gave recognition to the notion that inclusion might benefit all students. This article suggests that expanding the parameters of inclusion is appropriate but not a simple task. The first portion of the article addresses the identification of special and general education impediments that may prevent the smooth transformation of a traditional educational program into an inclusive one. These impediments include the special education individualized educational plan and certification mandates. The structure of the school related to the organization and curriculum are the general education impediments being examined. What then follows are strategies for relieving the pressures exerted by the impediments, through the reconstruction of a school's organization structure, adoption of a collaborative role of teaching and implementation of a multicultural curriculum focus to broaden the perspective of inclusion. This broader perspective will be of benefit to all children because the instructional emphasis in general education, would be on heterogeneous grouping rather than homogeneous groups and its attendant sorting process.

For decades there has been a tremendous effort to transform the status of disabled children from second to first class citizens. This move is anchored in the belief that the sorting of children into categories of general education and special education creates a second class citizenship for

those not included in the general education track. Further complicating this situation is the emergence of burgeoning categories of children caught in between the two systems and labeled at-risk (Skritic, 1991a). According to Yates (1992) "As larger percentages of students in the educational system are represented by culturally and linguistically diverse students, the group the system has had the least success with, it might be concluded that special education will begin to receive larger numbers of referrals for services i.e., the regular system may begin to "dump" students into special classes (p.6)." Thus, the ranks of second class students have tremendous potential for expansion.

Currently there is growing recognition that perhaps as many as 75% of the children classified as disabled have been misdiagnosed (Reynolds, Wang & Walberg, 1987). This revelation, coupled with political and financial considerations, is impelling educators to rethink which environment holds the best promise for educating disabled children. (Gartner & Lipsky, 1987; Fine & Asch, 1988; and Lipsky & Gartner, 1989) The prevailing thought is that the general education program should retain the responsibility for educating all children. This position replaces the previous notion that general education had degrees of responsibility as represented by the special education continuum of services (Deno, 1970). These services emphasized special class placement foremost with a potential promise of return to general education as the child became "cured" of special needs. This viewpoint was the impetus that propelled the beginning of the full inclusion movement.

Presently controversy abounds regarding the parameters of inclusion (Fuchs and Fuchs, 1991; Kaufman, 1991, 1993; Stainback, Stainback, East 1994; Singer, 1988). Two distinct positions have emerged that Fuchs and Fuchs (1992) have defined as: "conservationists and abolitionists." Conservationists support the notion that the comprehensive array of support services needed to educate many disabled children can only be found in separate settings. Conversely, abolitionists believe that schools must provide all necessary support systems within general education classrooms regardless of cost. For purposes of clarity, the issue of full inclusion is best defined by common elements. According to Sailor (1991) the basic components that most inclusion models share include:

1. all students attend school closest to home,
2. the population of disabled students in a school reflects the natural proportion of the district,
3. zero reject model,
4. placements are age appropriate,
5. cooperative learning is a primary feature, and
6. special education supports within context of general education environment.

The destinies of disabled and at-risk students are intertwined within the public school setting. In traditional schools, Skritic (1991b) maintains that students whose needs fall outside the instructional repertoire of teachers in the standard programs are referred to different teachers with the expertise to meet those needs. Students move between the two groups constantly in relation to the available educational options. Whatever the educational options, none are accorded the first class status of the traditional academic programs. There is a move to increase the parameters of the full inclusion movement to affect all students, not just disabled students. According to Burello & Lashley (1992), the inclusive school provides the atmosphere for addressing the needs of all students while preparing them to become independent and productive citizens in future society. In essence, if the philosophy of full inclusion is imbedded in the mission statement of a school, then all educational strategies will reflect accommodations to address the needs of all students. Eventually this approach will make an entire student body feel welcome in a school with approaches to education that are learner-centered.

A major appeal of the inclusive school movement is the stress placed on teacher collaboration to meet the children's needs. All staff take responsibility for the learning problems of students. Special services outside the classroom (pull out) are minimized and greater effort is placed on specialists working within the classroom structure. The core feature of this model is that general education teachers retain full responsibily for the direction of the educational plans for all students. This model may best be summed up by a Burello & Lashley (1992) analogy. "This model is similar to one in the medical profession in which the general practitioner retains

responsibility for the treatment of a patient, even though specialists may be involved in the diagnosis and treatment (p. 77)."

Impediments To Inclusion

The evolution of the inclusionary school may be stultified by several oppositional factors related to special education and the structure of schools. The original intent of special education was to provide a program for students whose learning needs were different than those of the more able students. In pursuit of this goal, individualized education plans and certification dictates contained in federal regulations and state mandates were instituted as guarantees that special instruction would be individualized and/or separate (Ysseldyke & Algozzine, 1982: and Stainback, Stainback & Forest, 1989). Now these guarantees have become impediments that may promote differences rather than similarities in the educational needs of children.

Special education impediments aside, the structure of contemporary schools has never been designed to embrace special programs for disabled or at-risk students and presents another formidable impediment (Smith, Price & Marsh, 1986). Schools are designed to accommodate mainstream students; any deviants from this pattern may be referred to special programs where they then become a lesser priority for education. The inflexible nature of the schools structure, i.e. organization and curriculum, presents a pernicious influence on efforts to develop educational programs that are guided by the principles of inclusion rather than exclusion.

The intent of this section is to examine, in greater detail, the special education and school structure impediments. This in-depth exploration of the impediments will provide insight into which ones may continue to exist because they transcend local building change efforts and others that might be eliminated through proper planning. This review will underscore why the special education impediments, i.e., program mandates, might continue to exert a less than favorable influence on the efforts of schools to adopt inclusion until legislative acts remedy this situation. The section concludes with the identification of impediments, related to school structure and curriculum once eliminated will provide the platform on which to launch an inclusive school initiative.

Impediments of Special Education Program Mandates

Perhaps the best method for reviewing the impediments created by special education program mandates to inclusionary schools is to initially view the issue from an historical perspective. Special education has moved through the following three major eras: isolation, tolerance and integration. These three eras are being suggested because they provide the basis for a descriptive classification of the degrees of program acceptance by general education. The Isolation Era from 1900-1975, represents a period in which institutions, day schools in church basements and self contained classes, supplied the program arrangements for the majority of the disabled students not classified as speech impaired or learning disabled. It was during this period that the separate system concept encouraged special educators to build isolated systems apart from the direction of the main system. General educators viewed special education as a program that provided relief for students unable to maintain the pace of traditional academic programs. Also, during this era, most parents seemed to be satisfied with having the school system take responsibility for educating their children in whatever setting possible.

The enactment of PL 94-142 launched the Tolerance Era 1975-1985. Tolerance is an appropriate description for this era because the federal regulations and state mandates demanded greater acceptance of special education students in regular school buildings and classes. This increased presence of special education students was tolerated as a necessary condition needed to comply with regulations and mandates. General and special educators were forced into a marriage that compelled them to address the letter of the law and the attendant accountability measures which were related to least restrictive environment and individualized education programs (IEPs). This marriage, according to Peltier (1993), was ill conceived and created a Pollyanna-Horatio Algier-like euphoria that was not reality based. The spirit of PL 94-142 was little more than an afterthought during this era.

Since 1985, the increased attention has been given to the spirit of the legislative enactment for special education ushered in the Integration Era. Efforts to place disabled students in the mainstream were less than productive because "mainstreaming" focused on returning disabled children to general education classes as opposed to providing resources for them to remain, as

much as possible, in these classes. The Regular Education Initiative (Will, 1986) was a reaction to the failed mainstreaming endeavors during the Tolerance Era and provided the basis for the design of this keystone initiative. A major centerpiece of Regular Education Initiative (REI) was the focus on an amalgamation of general and special education resources to address the needs of both disabled and at-risk students. Some scholars debated a major flaw of the initiative in that it was conceived and promoted by special educators rather than a joint venture sponsored by general and special education (Kauffman & Hallahan, 1990 and Mcleskey, Skiba & Wilcox 1990). The early 90's has witnessed the components of the REI, related to sharing general and special education resources, incorporated into full inclusion approaches, the majority of which were designated for disabled children, a disheartening trend which tends to obliterate attempts to promote inclusive schools for all aspects of diversity.

Efforts to promote inclusive schools from a special education perspective, may not be productive in light of federal regulations and state mandates that pertain to the individual education plan and certification/specialization. An illumination of these two imperatives will now be explored.

Individual Education Plan

Individualized education plans are required for all students identified as disabled. This strategy was a result of a body of research that "dissuaded" educators from continuing to provide instruction to disabled students in a homogeneous fashion and to initiate individualized instruction (Winzer, 1993). Simpson, Whelan & Zabel (1993) indicate that IEPs were designed to ensure that teachers would provide an appropriate education to disabled children based on their potential. IEPs were also perceived as a strategy that would increase the likelihood of many disabled students receiving at least a portion of their education within the orbit of general education (Simpson et al 1993). This strategy once hailed as a sanguine accountability measure, was sometimes circumvented by the practice of writing IEPs that had very little relevance to the individual needs of students in special education or mainstream classes (Schenk, 1980; and Smith & Simpson, 1989). Eventually, the IEP became a source of consternation, frustration, and vexation for many building staff and presented several dilemmas. Ethical dilemmas mounted over placing services in the IEPs

that the district could not deliver. Financial dilemmas confronted school boards that were being mandated to serve the disabled while programs for the disadvantaged were underfunded or non-existent. Philosophical dilemmas arose when general education teachers, with no special training, had classes of thirty students, including disabled children, while special education teachers had classes of eight to ten children with an aide.

IEPs tend to emphasize the dissimilarities, rather than the similarities, in the ability to learn of disabled students. In addition, the IEPs tend to continue to foster the notion of separate systems for the disabled and the non-disabled. In inclusive schools, the teaching and learning approach is student centered, a process that encompasses the individualization of instruction mandated by the IEP.

Certification

Special education certification became mandatory, in part, to prohibit a common practice of exposing special education students to a disproportionate number of teachers who were not trained or who had been unsuccessful in general education (Winzer, 1993). Unfortunately, these certification requirements were more applicable for the decreasingly unpopular model of self-contained special services. Limited consideration was given to revising certification requirements to encompass the trend toward increasing the presence of special education students in general education classes. Efforts have mounted, over the past several decades, to increase the numbers of disabled children served in general education classes. Subsequent to 1975, federal regulations and state mandates have crystallized these efforts and presently 95% of identified students with disabilities receive at least a portion of their education in general education settings (U.S. Department of Education, 1990). In spite of this trend, state certification officials have been slow to recognize the need to mandate that teaching licenses reflect an increase in the number of courses that emphasize educating all children in regular classes. Simpson et al (1993) indicated "Presently, a single course about handicapping conditions that emphasizes categorical characteristics is typically required in [general education] pre-service programs." (p.12). This practice coupled with student teaching experiences that are not integrated throughout preservice experiences spells disaster for beginners with disabled and non-disabled students to educate. For example,

Wolczenski (1993) noted that pre-service students were more accepting of teaching special education students until actual exposure occurred during student teaching. Then acceptance markedly declined. Undergraduate teacher preparation programs need to provide more courses as well as earlier exposure to teaching disabled children in integrated classes. This practice would also be of great benefit for the at-risk students who may be identified for special education placement due to poor academic achievement or behavior problems.

Since teacher education continues to prepare general and special education pre-service personnel in a separate fashion, it will be exceedingly difficult to promote collaboration across programs. Vautour (1993) suggests that colleges and universities have to stress collaboration by restructuring their departments within schools of education to include techniques of collaboration. Otherwise, it will be difficult for teachers to engage in the collaborative process needed to educate diverse student populations.

School Structure Impediments

Discussion of school structure impediments requires an examination of two major components: organization and curriculum design. The development of an inclusive school will require that one must complement the other if the diverse needs of students are to be met. Current changes in both components, related to school reform, tend not to alter working relations within the organization and through the curriculum medium (Elmore, 1990). What specific impediments have prohibited these suggested changes?

Organization Impediments

Traditionally schools have been organized in an hierarchical fashion that promoted the development of uniform operating procedures. Tye (1987) refers to these procedures as the deep structure of schooling related to uniformity of classrooms and schedules, reliance on textbooks and use of test scores. These operational procedures accommodated student diversity through the promotion and support of the schools' sorting function. Students who did not conform to the standard operating procedures were frequently removed from the general program and relegated to a support program.

The hierarchical organization of the school facilitated the development of specialists and special programs that could relieve the general education track of the pressure for educating deviants. Educators operated from the premise that the child was at fault rather than the manner in which the system was structured to serve children. In fact, as Cuban (1989) suggests, "two most popular explanations for low academic achievement of at-risk children locate the problem in children themselves or in their families." (p.78). Collaboration across areas of professional expertise was not encouraged. To wit, the special education program continuum of services was designed to support the standard plan of operation. The continuum served students according to the degree to which they "malfunctioned." The more severe the problem the less responsibility placed on general education programs. This categorical service decreased opportunities for collaboration between general and special education were also decreased.

Current reform movements related to decentralization and site-based management have met with questionable success in eliminating the impediments of standard plans of operation and specialists. This lack of success has been related to the inability of the structure of schools to be adaptable (Weick, 1982; Bolman & Deal, 1991; and Sergiovonni 1991). Frequently, schools' adaptations to change have been accomplished by simply adding more separate units or increasing the number of specialists. However, these are surface changes that have done very little to encourage staff collaboration in a inter-disciplinary fashion around education problems. The reform movements of the nineties tend to identify greater numbers of at-risk students and thus strengthen the rationale for expanding special programs and overworking the special education placement process (Ysseldyke, Algozzine & Thurlow 1992).

Some might even argue that the reform movements have supported the maintainence of these impediments because these effort has stressed educational excellence first and diversity second. Michel Resnick (1993) of the National School Board Association supported this position when he indicated that one key issue of return is to determine an appropriate education for disabled children in a regular classroom, while raising academic expectations for academic performance for all children.

Many educators are not uncomfortable operating within the confines of a standard plan of operation whether it is system-wide or school-based. In fact, Sizer (1988) has cogently illustrated that many teachers recognize some change is necessary, but they have become adjusted to school routines. This standard plan of operation continues to encourage professionals to promote areas of specialization so that, in their minds, they will be able to provide more assistance to needy children. As long as teachers support the traditional plan of "handing off" children with special needs, uniform operating procedures and special expertise will continue to impede progress toward inclusive schools.

Curriculum Design Impediment

Other uniform operating procedures related to school district policies, directives, mandates and culture directly or indirectly influence the design of the curriculum. This medium shapes learning experiences of students and assists society in defining the extent to which they will or will not be successful.

Many educators argue that the curriculum provides an element of social control. The traditional view of curriculum asserts that a standard set of learning experiences in a school should be unfettered by external influences. Furthermore, the agenda for social control reflects a conservative Euro-American middle class orientation that favors those students with similar backgrounds. Critical curriculum theorists are uneasy with the traditional viewpoint of curriculum as a means of social control. Critical theorists believe that the curriculum should be governed by considerations that are driven by reality rather than rationality (Giroux, 1980; Hlebowitsh, 1992). In their view the school experience must discontinue transmitting traditional norms through prescriptive learning experiences. This pattern of instruction provides a form of repression that is unhealthy for those that do not conform with norms. Hlebowitsh (1993) states "the construction of special education as an instrumental category cannot be understood simply as the manifest and rational attempt to offer certain youngsters remedial and other opportunities for benevolent purposes: rather it is seen as a covert effort to sort and slot students in ways that oppress a disproportionate number of minority youngsters and those of low socioeconomic backgrounds." (p. 7).

In essence, school structure impediments related to the organization of services and curriculum design create very stiff obstacles for the inclusive school movement to overcome. Most previous reform efforts have not been successful in improving the achievement of minorities nor reducing the over-representation of select groups in special education. Frequently the changes designed to overcome impediments have been cosmetic reactions to public criticism and done little to invoke teacher ownership (Fullan and Stiegelbauer 1991. Stated more precisely, Conley (1993) asserts "Renewal and reform can be thought of as incremental forms of change in most situations and manifestations. They do not disturb organization features, substantially, nor do they necessarily alter the ways adults alter their roles." (p. 12). Without a commitment to move beyond superficial change, there is no real incentive for change until the emphasis is placed upon the school changing to serve the child's needs rather than the child changing to fit the standard operation procedure or risk being relegated to second class citizenship in a special program.

Circumventing Structural Impediments

Regretably, legislation pertaining to the education of the disabled will have to be revised to remove impediments created by the IEP and Certification. However, inability to eliminate these special education impediments does not forestall efforts to become an inclusive school. The inflexibility of the special education elements will require an increase in the flexibility of the school structure to accomodate an inclusive school initiative. There is a need to identify elements of a school structure design that could increase the flexibility needed to address the challenges presented by a diverse population of students through an individualized approach to education. This approach could serve all students and still provide the individualized instruction required by regulations and mandates pertaining to the disabled. The elements that could best serve this dual purpose and circumvent the structural impediments would need to be those that directly impact the degree of flexibility surrounding decisions about the instructional program. Within this context, the school's model of governance is the source of power that drives the degrees of freedom in identifying an instructional program that meets the needs of a student body. Decisions regarding what will be taught, how it will be taught and under what philosophical focus eminate from this center of power. Circumventing the impediments related to a schools organization and curriculum

would require the establishment of a model of participatory management that would promote increased teacher collaboration in decisions regarding the adoption of an inclusive school mode. A school-based management team that includes in its deliberations on governance issues of curriculum and instruction might be the most prudent method for accomplishing this task. For this reason, adopting site-based management, collaborative teaching approaches and a multicultural philosophy are the most suitable initiatives needed to make transformation from a traditional to an inclusive school.

Site-Based Management: Reconstructing the Organizational Structure

Many authors are arguing convincingly the need for changing the organizational structure of schooling. Claims have been made that education may experience forward progress if the central office power is devolved to the schools that directly serve the children (Bailey 1991; Conley & David 1989; Bacharach, 1990). Inherent in this claim is the belief that professionals responsible for the education of children must have the authority and resources to make a difference based on local rather than district needs.

Initiatives related to restructuring have suggested plans of choice, heterogeneous grouping, increased state involvement and academic advancement based on proficiency rather than progression through grades (Estes, Levine & Waldrop, 1990; Mazzoni, 1991; Thomas, 1993; Wheelock, 1992). All the suggested initiatives contain merit but none will reach a level of successful implementation without the ownership and commitment of building level staff. Only when staff perceive the benefits of addressing the needs of all children can the inclusive school concept begin to reach reality. Site-based management with its focus on increased decision-making power and meaningful collaboration between staff members presents an appealing platform on which to build ownership for an inclusive instructional program (Hatry, Madry, Ashford & Wyatt 1993). For example, Conley (1993) indicated that teachers want to be involved in decisions to get their jobs done more effectively and when they feel powerless over the conditions affecting student success, their personal efficacy tends to be diminished. Without the institution of site-based management it might be impossible to move forward with the collaboration needed to foster

interdisciplinary planning and coordinated student services. These imperatives are critical for the successful transformation of a traditional school into an inclusive school.

Perhaps a recent trend in business and industry may add another dimension to the current site-based management movement in education. This trend suggests that the organization hierarchy of many businesses be flattened and that the major functions be eliminated in favor of organization around processes (The Horizontal Corporation,1993). These processes would be separated into three to five categories such as product development, sales and customer support. Each process would be operated by a multidisciplinary team headed by a team leader. The primary focus would be on customer satisfaction and the degree to which this is attained would determine the extent of the team rewards. Finally, teams would be temporary in nature and adapt a new configuration of players as the processes change.

According to Pekarsky (1982), school tends to be a set of transactions between service deliverer and students with specific sets of challenges. Thus the emphasis is on effective service functions rather than on the processes associated with successful learning. Current site-based management models still tend to support standard operating functions rather than processes. Adherence to functional tasks promotes continued reliance on educational specialists that provide services based on what Elmore (1993) suggests as the norms of good practice rather than what may be best for the individual student. Imagine how much more effective site-based management might be if it were organized around processes related to client satisfaction, teacher renewal, integrated program development or alternative student assessment. Teams of teachers, parents and students would examine these processes periodically to determine if the teaching and learning environment are in compliance with the mission statement of the school.

Another advantage of using the process approach and changing the composition of the team is to enhance greater commitment to the direction of the school. Staff members understand and respect the need for more time for interdisciplinary planning and school-based services. Sacrifices related to the block and flexible scheduling needed for the collaboration and student centered projects focus of inclusive schools are more easily made when staff participate in the decision to move in this direction. In fact, interdisciplinary planning and decision making take on a totally

different meaning when viewed as integral parts of the process rather than being viewed as isolated tasks to be accomplished.

While this article suggests that site-based management may facilitate the reconstitution of the governance process to expand the high level of collaboration needed in inclusive schools, caution must be taken in implementing this form of governance. The empirical evidence concerning the effectiveness of site-based management is scant. Malen, Ogawn & Kranz (1990) could not determine the efficacy of the model based on selected investigations because the data were not comparable across implementation designs. Wohlsetter and Odden (1992) indicated that site-based management comes in many forms, is devoid of solid accountability measures and is confounded by the clash between state and local policies on governance. Concerns have also been raised about the model's power to improve teaching and learning through increased decision making (Fullan, 1993; Hill & Bonan 1991). Under the banner of cautious optimism, it is suggested that the organizational culture of the school be assessed to determine the degree of support for decentralized decision making. This strategy will expose the extent to which faculty are prepared to expand the collaboration network and take ownership for the responsibilities associated with operating an inclusive school. This dialogue is particularly pertinent to ensure that special and general education teachers form partnerships to support school reform efforts (Miller 1990). Willingness to strengthen partnerships in the collaborative process will provide the atmosphere for site-based management that is unfettered by signs of retrenchment.

Collaboration: Reconstructing the Role of Teaching

Reconstructing the organizational structure of the school in isolation of a simultaneous action for the process of instruction would be counter productive to the development of an inclusive school (Lieberman, 1990). The natural link between the two areas of reform is the strength of the collaboration network. In fact, Goldring and Rallis (1993) found that principals implementing change in dynamic schools tend to emphasize staff collaboration and collegiality on a greater scale than their counterparts in traditional schools. Clearly, collaboration is a keystone of reform efforts because it is the main vehicle for examining the extent to which faculty participate in the restructuring effort.

Pugach & Johnson (1994) define collaboration as "working well with children and interacting well with adults." (p. 5). They suggest that this expanded definition promotes the thinking that the school is a community in which teachers are interested in the educational well being of all the children and what goes on in the school at large. To accomplish this broader perspective of collaboration, Johnson & Pugach (1992) identify four roles that form the framework for school-wide implementation: supportive, facilitative, informative and prescriptive roles. This framework provides for a host of single roles and role combinations that are needed to restructure a school to accommodate the needs of the children rather than the reverse.

In inclusion or inclusive schools, these various roles will encourage student and teacher collaboration in the construction of a community of learners, facilitate the integration of curriculum planning activities within and among grades and subject areas and emphasize the structuring of student support services to under-gird the instructional process. To afford additional clarity about the change in the roles of instruction, a more detailed review of the roles related to (1) community of learners (2) curriculum integration planning and (3) student services is provided.

Community of Learners

The medium of collaboration establishes the stage on which to reshape a traditional school into an inclusive community for all learners. Obviously, for the school to embrace this concept, a similar philosophy must be reflected in the classroom. Sapona & Phillips (1993) portrayed a community of learners as "a group of individuals supporting each other in learning. It is a place where learning is expected and modeled, a place where teacher becomes student and student becomes teacher. A community of learners views inquiry and exploration as windows to the world and each other and learning becomes a stance - a dominant way of operating as an individual and as a collective" (p. 64). This concept creates a receptive atmosphere for inclusion because it captures the resiliency factors that diverse populations of students exhibit rather than their deficits.

The classroom as a community of learners is an appealing initiative but within the present framework of traditional schools, it is unworkable. In traditional schools, learning tasks are presented in an isolated fashion with little or no reliance on students background knowledge (Poplin 1984). This is a reductionist approach (Poplin,1988) to learning and is not capable of

meeting the challenges presented by diversity because the learning experiences have limited cohesiveness for the present or the future. A more viable teaching stance would be constructivism because, according to Brooks (1990), adherents to this philosophy believe knowledge is a result of individual constructions of reality becoming incongruent with new observations. Constructivists use techniques such as; coaching, cooperative learning, heterogeneous grouping and alternative assessment. These inclusive techniques of instruction legitimize the community of learners concept through structuring classroom environments to respect and value the contributions of all participants contributions while exploring academic content. The constructivist approach to establishing a community of learners does not promote less learning content. On the contrary, the goal is for students to become active, not passive, to retain more knowledge not less and to exhibit motivation, not rejection. Additionally, the special education IEP becomes obsolete because inclusive schools should feature a learning environment that is student-centered and guided by a constructivist, teaching stance.

Integration of Curriculum

Developing a community of learners within individual classrooms provides an inclusive learning atmosphere that celebrates and promotes diversity. Utilizing a constructivist teaching stance facilitates the development of this setting. These individual classroom efforts are important but may fall short of a serious attempt at inclusion unless the school also adopts the philosophy that broadens the perspective of the community of learners to encompass all academic disciplines. Teacher collaboration is needed to broaden this perspective beyond the classroom through planning an integrated curriculum that assists students to observe the connection of concepts in relation to their backgrounds. Lewis (1992), suggests the curriculum is a potent tool for reform when it integrates and interrelates subjects and disciplines in a manner that makes learning experiences meaningful within and between grades and subjects. Unfortunately, this is not the typical case. Many children do not fare well in school because they do not comprehend their exposure to isolated subject matter. Jacobs (1989) argued that this lack of comprehension is related to curriculum designs that operate on fragmented class schedules, provide irrelevant coursework and lag woefully behind the knowledge explosion. In light of these facts, educators are making

attempts to structure learning experiences in a more meaningful manner through a most powerful strategy, integration of the curriculum. This curriculum integration initiative forges all learning experiences into a package that is student-centered, meaningful and relevant. In addition, an integrated curriculum promotes heterogeneous classes, a clear sign of welcome for strategies of inclusion.

There appear to be at least 10 different models suggested for accomplishing curriculum integration. Perhaps the most effective and efficient model for inclusive schools is the integrated model, which, according to Fogarty (1991), structures interdisciplinary topics within a conceptual framework. At a minimum, the basic subjects are integrated; however, the model is designed to also accommodate the co-curricular areas within the content. A promising addition is the effort some educators use to accommodate diversity by making the model a student-centered approach that provides the learner with various avenues of exploration and explanation.

One strength of this approach according to Jacobs (1989) is that "it encourages teachers to be active curriculum designers and determine the nature and degree of integration and the scope sequence of study." (p. 9). This cooperative planning is a process that places greater emphasis on teacher and student manipulation of learning experiences. For example, with the incorporation of flexible schedules, the range of learning experiences may include individual, small and large group activities.

Perhaps the greatest strength offered by curriculum integration is that it provides teachers with the data for charting curriculum goals. Previous attempts at this process have been unsuccessful because the goals have been too broad, diverse or ambitious; a sign that teachers planned from isolated perspectives. This situation may not be conducive to inclusive school development efforts because tracking may be an outcome as a result of ambiguity in curriculum goals. Prager (1993) noted that the proper knowledge gained through teamwork and ownership promotes laudable levels of high quality student outcomes and professional practice. In addition, Lee and Smith (1993) asserted that secondary benefits derived from this teamwork increases teacher efficacy and satisfaction. In essence, curriculum integration is a process that facilitates the

inclusion of the students by exposing them to an interdisciplinary knowledge base that is structured by reasonable curriculum goals and supported by coordinated student support services.

Support Services

Collaboration is frequently the vehicle educators use to promote restructuring the education process in classroom and schools. Support services, i.e. social work, psychology, counseling and therapy, require extensive collaboration, particularly with inclusion but, may not receive the same prominence as instruction. Unfortunately, education and support services are frequently viewed as functions, the collaboration perspective for both areas tends to be from a separationist perspective; however, both initiatives are a part of the entire process of structuring educational experiences for children. Providing a challenging student-centered content to children suffering the ravages of abuse, neglect, homelessness or violence may not be accurately implemented if it does not give recognition and acceptance to a child's reality and builds upon those experiences. As Crowson and Boyd (1992) suggested, the movements of parental involvement, instructional partnerships and coordinated children services are inter-connected and are critical elements needed to improve education. Stainback & Stainback (1992) posited that "although classroom teachers have a range of curricular and instructional skills, educating some students in inclusive classrooms requires contributions from professionals representing a variety of disciplines." (p. 101). They further indicate that the need for these services do not reflect negatively on the teachers. Teachers are an integral part of a support team rather than a separate entity that has no connection with support services.

Educators are now beginning to understand the importance of using student services as a process for developing a wholesome and productive learning environment. The importance of support services had previously been undervalued and perceived primarily as support systems for special programs. Consequently, the services were delivered in a fragmented fashion by a variety of school and agency professionals.

Currently professionals in the fields of children services are experimenting with models of coordinated student services. The focus of these models is to provide all services at one site, preferably the school campus (Kappich & Kirst, 1993). Professionals that participate in this model

of services are required to use a model of collaboration across disciplines that is structured by the holistic treatment of the child. The school does not direct the services but coordinates the activities and insures that the services are accessible and appropriate. A promising feature of the services is the increased emphasis placed upon prevention. Clearly this approach renounces the notion that these services are for special students, thereby, enhancing the efforts of inclusive schools to address all students needs without the damaging aspects of labeling.

Within the focus of coordinated services in schools, the roles of the classroom teacher take on greater prominence. Previously these student services were provided outside the classroom and the teacher had little knowledge of what transpired. The vehicle by which the services were most commonly provided was a multidisciplinary approach which required several disciplines to focus on a problem with no attempt at integration (Meeth, 1978). Under this new arrangement the teacher is a part of the service planning team which uses a child-centered trans-disciplinary approach to address problems (Gallivan-Fenlon, 1994). This transdisciplinary approach is classroom- centered, requires that many student services related to therapy be provided in the classroom and proscribes the classroom disruption associated with pull out services. Serving as a member of the transdisciplinary team exposes the teacher to new skills and techniques that may be used with other children within the perspective of prevention.

Teachers involved in integrating the curriculum are also participants on an assortment of coordinated student services teams. Both processes ensure that the instruction provided to students is child-centered and promotes greater emphasis on the provision of an optimal learning environment that includes prevention and intervention, essential conditions for inclusive schools.

Multi-Cultural Education: Reconstructing Curriculum Focus

Schools in the United States have traditionally been friendly and accommodating for Euro-American descendants. In fact, schools tend to provide a wholesome environment for most students from stable families with solid financial underpinnings (Bernstein, 1990; and Bourdieu, 1982). Unfortunately students who are minority and/or beset by impoverished financial circumstances, find schools to be menacingly unfriendly environments that track them away from mainstream activities. After several years of participating in school experiences, many minority

youth find themselves trapped in an unrelenting cycle of cumulative failure which leads to poor self esteem. Entombed in the cycle, students become identified as being in need of specialized services that further identify them as second class citizens and losers. The stage is then set for future dependence on the largesse of the system which accompanies second class citizenship and appears in the form of welfare, incarceration and institutionalization.

The major intent of inclusive schools is to shape the school environment so that it may reflect an atmosphere that makes all students feel welcome. Removal of structural and special education impediments is a step in the right direction. However, schools may never truly offer a receptive environment until their curriculum content contains a sustained and sincere appreciation of all forms of diversity. Multicultural education is essential to the process because it places greater emphasis on partnerships between multicultural education and special education, a partnership which assists "inclusive schools to reconceptualize the mainstream parameter" (Ball & Harry 1993, p. 35).

Foucault (1984) contends that education is designed to provide enlightenment and instill obedience. Students with a background of the dominant culture experience a curriculum that provides both elements and assists them to exhibit the "right stuff" needed to take their place as productive citizens. Using this line of reasoning, one may infer that students, not of the dominant culture persuasion, encounter an environment that overlooks, devalues or misinterprets their cultural experiences. Their school achievement is sabotaged and redirected into less meaningful and harmful remedial experiences designed to make them "better." The emphasis shifts from enlightenment to obedience and the stage is set for a less fruitful participation in the system. Even when opportunities exist for advancement, Olsen (1993) reports that the group cannot mobilize itself to take advantage of them because their culture has been affected by a history of oppression. Lack of respect and understanding of ones cultural experiences is responsible for this shameful process and underscores the need to understand other cultures through the concept of cultural relativism (Banks, 1993; Gullnick & Chinn, 1990). When this concept pervades the school structure the initiation and maintenance of an inclusive philosophy becomes less ardent.

Ogbu (1993) submits that accommodating the cultural diversity and learning issue through the provision of a core curriculum or multicultural education is not sufficient for addressing needs of minority students. This core curriculum is driven by a stress on high standards and expectation as motivators for changing or channeling the in-school behaviors of minority students toward achievement. This call for higher standards seldom accounts for or is toward the culture experience of minority students. Promoting multicultural education facilitates greater appreciation of cultural diversity but does little to stress the responsibilities of minorities for school failure. In addition, Ogbu declared that multicultural-cultural education requires that only teachers and schools must change. Oppositional points of view to those expressed by Ogbu have been expressed by other scholars (Hursch, 1987; Finn and Ravitch, 1987; Schlesinger, 1991; Sowell, 1993).

Despite persuasive arguments against various aspects of multicultural education, there are certain approaches that could mesh nicely with the inclusive school initiative. What approach, most beneficial for inclusive schools environments, holds both minority students and teachers accountable for school performance? The cultural emancipation model is designed to accomplish both aims through the provision of a curriculum that promotes respect for cultural diversity within a framework of individual initiative. Grant and Sleeter (1989) claim that the model attaches a positive value to minority culture and asserts that a curriculum infused with acknowledgment of cultural diversity is self-affirming for the students. The structure of this model also facilitates student assessment of their capabilities in juxtaposition with their present and future status in school and the world (Appleton, 1983; Giroux, 1981; Suzuki, 1984). School failure, according to Ogbu (1978) is highly unlikely if students have a positive affinity for the home and other cultures.

Perhaps the most powerful influence the cultural emancipation model exerts is on the teachers. Ryan (1993, p. 13b) observed that "teacher's incomplete information about the evolution of racial and ethnic groups in America and a teacher's general insensitivity regarding individualities within these groups may well result in students receiving an inaccurate, over-simplified and stereo typical image of a group." The model requires that teachers assess personal values and beliefs prior to becoming engaged in implementation activities. This personal assessment is necessary if teachers are to be able to identify the resilient nature of students from diverse backgrounds and

construct inclusive learning experiences designed to assist students in shaping the future rather than preparing them for the future. The current method of preparing students for the future may be harmful because it does not alert students to the political realities of post-graduation employment opportunities that are based on qualifications needed for a position versus actual skills needed. This situation is particularly true for the diverse student populations in inclusive schools because they are children that frequently encounter these harsh realities. Conversely, the cultural emancipation model stresses individual development and achievement, within a framework of cultural sensitivity, that encourages them to shape the future based on the stark realities of the present. Radical curriculum theorists would encourage this approach because it provides a reality base that is essential for overcoming barriers to racism.

Conclusion

This article recommends that transformation from a traditional to an inclusive school may become a reality with certain modifications to the school and curricular structures. More specifically, it is suggested that the institution of site-based management, expanded role of teachers in collaboration and reshaping the multicultural focus of the school, are the major steps to be addressed during the transformation process. These steps are not beyond a school's capacity to change, however, they require that the school reconstruct its activities to reflect a focus on process rather than functions. Emphasis on functions prevents inclusion for all students because it tends to include practices that are the hallmark of the separate system approach that divides special and general education.

At the present time, aspects of the inclusive school are taking shape in the form of professional development schools, magnet programs, charter schools and experiments in local site-based managed schools (Hunter, 1994). All these initiatives have the potential to accommodate the structural changes suggested in this article. Many of these initiatives currently emphasize one or more of the suggested structural changes, but not all, nor do they make clear distinctions between functions and process so that the collaboration may become more meaningful.

Perhaps one of the most promising ventures that encompass all of the recommendations is the Coalition of Essential Schools Movement. To qualify as a member in the coalition, a school must gradually restructure its instructional program to incorporate the following collaboration strategies; heterogeneous classes, integrated curriculum, student-centered approach, constructivist teacher stance and flexible schedule. The consensus needed prior to the transition to an Essential School is best facilitated through a form of site-based governance. Finally, multiculturalism is considered a natural companion of heterogeneous classes in an Essential School. The strongest appeal of this movement is the insistence that all activities of the school are viewed as processes connected through collaboration.

One note of caution, the inclusion movement will never be an effective educational reform strategy with an exclusive focus on disabled children. This exclusive focus provides a high visibility target for naysayers, struggling to restructure education to accommodate the demands of a

global economy, to decry the intent of the strategy. Additionally, the narrow focus enshrines these critics in their traditional position as gatekeepers of the portals of accessibility to the advantages accorded non-disabled students.

Inclusion as a reform strategy, contains many philosophical underpinnings that could and must be transformed into new dimensions of educational programs that will benefit all children. The inclusive school model, for all children, provides the concept needed to reconstruct the special education full inclusion model into an initiative that appreciates and accommodates all aspects of diversity with little or no reliance on the labeling process. In theory, the concept of the inclusive school reduces the friction caused by the collision of a strategy for equity against the traditional sorting function of school.

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Biographical Statement

William Malloy is Director of Public School Services and Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Leadership and Department of Special Education, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, School of Education, Peabody Hall, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3500.